



April 7, 2000

Ms. Lisa Aguilar
Assistant City Attorney
City of Corpus Christi
P.O. Box 9277
Corpus Christi, Texas 78469-9277

OR2000-1343

Dear Ms. Aguilar:

You ask whether certain information is subject to required public disclosure under chapter 552 of the Government Code. Your request was assigned ID# 134493.

The City of Corpus Christi (the "city") received a request for any reports that reveal the name, age, and city of residence of an individual involved in a specific shooting; the name, age, and city of residence of a specific witness; and the victim's age and address. You claim that the requested information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.108 of the Government Code. We have considered the exception you claim and reviewed the submitted information.

Section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code states that information held by a law enforcement agency or prosecutor that deals with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime is excepted from required public disclosure "if release of the information would interfere with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime." Gov't Code § 552.108(a)(1). You have submitted the offense report which relates to the crime at issue. You inform us that the release of the requested information would interfere with a pending investigation of this crime. You also state that the requested information does not constitute "basic information" deemed public information in *Houston Chronicle Publishing Co. v. City of Houston*, 531 S.W.2d 177 (Tex. Civ. App.-- Houston [14th Dist.] 1975), *writ ref'd n.r.e. per curiam*, 526 S.W.2d 559 (Tex. 1976). After reviewing your arguments and the submitted documents, we conclude that the information pertaining to the names, ages, and cities of residence of an individual involved in a specific shooting and of a specific witness does not constitute the type of information within the meaning of "basic information" in offense reports as determined by *Houston Chronicle*. We find that the release of this information would interfere with the pending investigation of the crime. Therefore, this information may be withheld from public disclosure under section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code.

We note, however, that section 552.108 is inapplicable to basic information about an arrested person, an arrest, or a crime. Gov't Code § 552.108(c). We believe such basic information refers to the information held to be public in *Houston Chronicle*, 531 S.W.2d at 177. Thus, you must release the type of information that is considered to be front page offense report information, even if that information is not actually on the front page of the offense report. Gov't Code § 552.108(c); *see* Open Records Decision No.127 (1976) (summarizing the types of information deemed public by *Houston Chronicle*). We note that you have the discretion to release all or part of the remaining information that is not otherwise confidential by law. Gov't Code § 552.007.

Additionally, we note that the victim's age and address do not appear in the submitted documents. The Public Information Act (the "Act") does not require a governmental body to prepare new information in response to open records requests. Open Records Decision Nos. 452 (1986), 342 (1982). Furthermore, the Act does not ordinarily require a governmental body to obtain new information to comply with a request. Open Records Decision No. 561 (1990). The Act only applies to information already in existence. Therefore, the city need not create any new documents to respond to the open records request.

This letter ruling is limited to the particular records at issue in this request and limited to the facts as presented to us; therefore, this ruling must not be relied upon as a previous determination regarding any other records or any other circumstances.

This ruling triggers important deadlines regarding the rights and responsibilities of the governmental body and of the requestor. For example, governmental bodies are prohibited from asking the attorney general to reconsider this ruling. Gov't Code § 552.301(f). If the governmental body wants to challenge this ruling, the governmental body must appeal by filing suit in Travis County within 30 calendar days. *Id.* § 552.324(b). In order to get the full benefit of such an appeal, the governmental body must file suit within 10 calendar days. *Id.* § 552.353(b)(3), (c). If the governmental body does not appeal this ruling and the governmental body does not comply with it, then both the requestor and the attorney general have the right to file suit against the governmental body to enforce this ruling. *Id.* § 552.321(a).

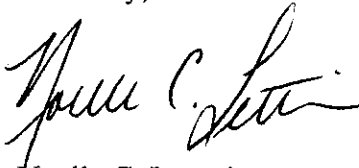
If this ruling requires the governmental body to release all or part of the requested information, the governmental body is responsible for taking the next step. Based on the statute, the attorney general expects that, within 10 calendar days of this ruling, the governmental body will do one of the following three things: 1) release the public records; 2) notify the requestor of the exact day, time, and place that copies of the records will be provided or that the records can be inspected; or 3) notify the requestor of the governmental body's intent to challenge this letter ruling in court. If the governmental body fails to do one of these three things within 10 calendar days of this ruling, then the requestor should

report that failure to the attorney general's Open Government Hotline, toll free, at 877/673-6839. The requestor may also file a complaint with the district or county attorney. *Id.* § 552.3215(e).

If this ruling requires or permits the governmental body to withhold all or some of the requested information, the requestor can appeal that decision by suing the governmental body. *Id.* § 552.321(a); *Texas Department of Public Safety v. Gilbreath*, 842 S.W.2d 408, 411 (Tex. App.–Austin 1992, no writ).

If the governmental body, the requestor, or any other person has questions or comments about this ruling, they may contact our office. Although there is no statutory deadline for contacting us, the attorney general prefers to receive any comments within 10 calendar days of the date of this ruling.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Noelle C. Letteri', written in a cursive style.

Noelle C. Letteri
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

ncl/nc

Ref: ID# 134493

Encl. Submitted documents

cc: Mr. Dan Parker
Corpus Christi Caller Times
P.O. Box 9136
Corpus Christi, Texas 78469
(w/o enclosures)